

Mr Andrew Baker
By email

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29 October 2009

Dear Mr Baker,

Tyre wear and speed cushions

Thank you very much for your Freedom of Information request of 31 August about speed cushions. I apologise for the delay in replying, and should inform you that your request has been treated as routine correspondence rather than a Freedom of Information request.

The Department for Transport acknowledges that concerns have been expressed over accelerated wear occurring on vehicles which traverse road humps repeatedly. In order to ascertain whether these concerns were justified, we commissioned the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) to study the impact of traffic calming on vehicles and their occupants. The resulting report from the study, TRL Report 614 (Kennedy et al., 2004) concluded that vehicles travelling over road humps at appropriate speeds should not suffer damage, provided the humps conform to the Highways (Road Hump) Regulations 1999.

The results of the research showed no damage to any of the vehicles, despite repeated passes at speeds of up to 40 mph. The research did not specifically look at frost damage and speed cushions. TRL Report 614 is available to purchase from the TRL website at www.trl.co.uk.

Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/07 does include some advice on maintenance. As well as the advice in LTN 1/07, Traffic Advisory Leaflet 4/94 provides advice on speed cushions and can be downloaded free from our website at http://www.dft.gov.uk/adobepdf/165240/244921/244924/TAL_4-941.

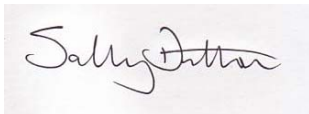
Local authorities have a duty under section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 to maintain their highways, which includes any traffic calming features. Although the Department does not produce specific guidance on maintenance, we do endorse 'Well-maintained Highways', a code of practice for highway maintenance published in 2005 by the Roads Liaison Group. It is available at www.ukroadsliaisongroup.org/roads/well_maintained.htm.

If you have concerns about speed cushions in a specific location, then you should contact the relevant local highway authority.

It is important not to lose sight of the primary purpose of traffic calming, which is to reduce vehicle speeds in areas where inappropriate speed is a problem, particularly in built-up areas where vulnerable road users are more likely to be present. Traffic calming plays an important role in improving road safety and meeting the Government's road casualty reduction targets. Each 1 mph reduction in vehicle speed resulting from traffic calming has been found to reduce accidents by around 5%.

I trust this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sally Dutton".

Sally Dutton